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JOE BIDEN SECURES ENOUGH ELECTORS TO WIN PRESIDENCY

With California certifying him as the winner of the November 3 election, Joe Biden now officially has 279 electors backing him

'IT'S THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS WHITE HOUSE'

Although it has been apparent for weeks that Biden won the presidential election, experts say officially securing 270-plus electors is the first step toward the White House. "It is a legal milestone and the first milestone that has that status. Everything prior to that was premised on what we call projections," said Edward B Foley, an American law professor

ELECTORS DUE TO VOTE ON DECEMBER 14

- The electors are expected to meet on December 14 to officially elect the next president. Results of their vote are due to be received and approved by Congress on January 6
- Three states that Biden won — Colorado, Hawaii and New Jersey — are yet to certify results. Once they do, Biden will have 306 electors

30

OF THE HORRIBLY SUBJECTIVE LAWSUITS FILED BY TRUMP HAVE BEEN REJECTED

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VIJAYAPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Round five too a stalemate, more talks on Dec 9

Farm unions reject govt's proposal to amend laws, say nothing short of repeal will do

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi / Chandigarh

THE government on Saturday seemed to hold on to the negotiations with the agitating farmers by the skin of their teeth after the union leaders threatened to walk out of the talks, saying it was time for the Centre to take concrete decisions on their demands.

According to sources, the government managed to pacify them saying an intra-government deliberation was required to consider their demands. Both the sides eventually agreed to meet for the sixth time on Wednesday, December 9, at 11 am.

Sources said the government delegation comprising Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Industries Som Prakash provided the farmers the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday. The minutes contained the government's plans on changing the laws in accordance with the farmers' demands.

Representatives of farmer unions on a 'maun vrat' during their meeting with govt | Shekhar Yadav, PTI

"The farmers took the document and deliberated on it during the 15-minute tea break," the sources said. But the farmers rejected the amendments and stuck to their demand of repealing all the three laws.

Sources said in the last segment of the meeting, the farmers went on a 'maun vrat' to express their disappointment. P9

MODI FACING BIGGEST TEST OF HIS TENURE |P9

Kannada activists hold a demonstration near the city bus stand in Mysuru on Saturday, as part of the Karnataka Bandh | UDAYSHANKAR S

On bandh day, life goes on as usual in Karnataka

Activists stopped

In Belagavi, where the BJP's executive meet was being held, pro-Kannada activists were taken into custody when they tried to take out a protest rally from Rani Channamma Circle to Gandhi Bhavan. A verbal clash took place between police and activists.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE statewide bandh called by pro-Kannada groups on Saturday opposing the government's decision to create the Maratha Development Corporation, evoked lukewarm response with protests in some places, arrests and traffic jams across the state.

More than 20,000 protesters were taken into preventive custody in different districts. Traffic was thrown out of gear for a few hours in central Bengaluru, but the bandh did not have much impact on normal life. Shops and commercial establishments were voluntarily closed in Gandhinagar and Chickpet areas in Bengaluru.

Protests were held in Vijayapura, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Bengaluru Rural, Gadag, Koppal, Hassan, Ramanagara, Shivamogga, Tumakuru, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Bagalkot, Chikkamagaluru and Mandya, among other districts. But normal life was unaffected.

In Mysuru, the central business district and business establishments on Devaraja Urs road remained open and witnessed usual buzz. P5

Ethics debate as minister gets Covid-19 after jab

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA & HARPREET BAJWA
@ New Delhi/Chandigarh

HARYANA health minister Anil Vij's tweet on Saturday that he had tested positive for Covid-19 and a statement by the Union Health Ministry that in effect identified Vij as a recipient of the Covid-19 vaccine kicked up a major controversy. Experts pointed out that they constitute either irresponsible statements or a breach of research.

"I have been tested Corona positive. I am admitted to Civil Hospital Ambala Cantt. All those who have come in close contact with me are advised to get themselves tested for corona," Vij wrote on Twitter.

Nearly two weeks back, Vij had declared that he would be administered the first dose of Covaxin as part of the experimental vaccine's phase 3 trial. Covaxin is an indigenously developed potential Covid-19 vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech and the ICMR and is currently being tested on nearly 26,000 volunteers in the final stage of the trial.

"I will be administered trial dose of Coronavirus vaccine Covaxin, a Bharat Biotech product Tomorrow at 11 am at Civil Hospital, Ambala Cantt. I have volunteered to take the trial dose," he had tweeted on November 19, a day before the highly publicised event in which he was administered the jab.

Saturday's announcement by Vij triggered a flurry of criticism at the hamhandedness of the sponsors of the trial as many saw it as a breach of the trial terms.

The terms make it that the doses are double-blinded and a randomised trial, suggesting that neither the participants nor investigators know whether they are receiving the actual vaccine or placebo shots.

The Union Health Ministry appeared to make the situation worse when it said "the anti-bodies against the infection build up in a human being only after a specific number of days pass after the second dose of the vaccine is taken since this is a two-dose vaccine."

BHARAT BIOTECH CLARIFIES

Bharat Biotech took to Twitter to allay any concerns, saying clinical trials are based on a two-dose schedule, given 28 days apart. The vaccine efficacy will be determined two weeks after the second dose, it said

CONTINUED ON: P9

INTERVIEW

PANEL NEEDS ₹250 CR TO HOLD GP POLLS

ASHWINI M SRIPAD
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka State Election Commission, which is gearing up to conduct the two-phase gram panchayat elections on December 22 and 27, has estimated that about Rs 250 will be required for the exercise, keeping Covid-19 safety norms in mind.

About four lakh candidates are expected to contest the election and close to three crore voters will elect their leaders. Conducting the massive exercise amidst the pandemic will be a challenging task. The SEC will provide sanitisers, thermal scanners and others safety measures at the polling booths.

FULL INTERVIEW | P4

WITH THIS ISSUE

PRIMARY CHARACTER

PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

Party indoors, no public celebration on New Year's Eve

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi

WITH experts hinting at a possible second wave of Covid-19 in the coming days, the State Government has decided to ban any sort of public celebration on New Year's Eve across the state, including Bengaluru. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has agreed to it and an order will be issued shortly, **Revenue Minister R Ashoka** announced here on Saturday.

Ashoka said he had held meetings with Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai on the issue over the past few days and also discussed it with the CM. "The Bengaluru City Police Commissioner, City Corporation Commissioner and Secretary of the Disaster Management Cell have shared their views on the issue. As vice-president of the Disaster Management Cell, I will issue an official order banning public celebrations after I reach Bengaluru," he said.

With huge crowds likely to gather in public places in Bengaluru and several other cities on New Year's Eve, it will be difficult for revellers to adhere to Covid norms. Ensuring wearing of masks and social distancing in such large gatherings will be tough. To prevent a surge in Covid cases, it was deemed necessary to ban public celebrations on December 31, he reasoned.

However, the government has decided to allow parties in hotels, resorts and other places by issuing directives to hotel managements to ensure adherence of Covid norms, said Ashok. P2

EXPRESS READ

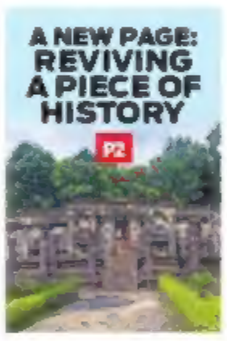
BBMP hikes fines for mask rule violation

Bengaluru: The BBMP on Saturday ruled that going forward, owners of commercial establishments who allow customers into their premises without masks will have to cough up a fine from ₹5,000 to ₹1 lakh. P3

Move to rename campus stokes row

T'puram: The ruling LDF and opposition Congress in Kerala on Saturday flayed the Centre's decision to name the second campus of Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology after late RSS ideologue M S Golwalkar. P7

A NEW PAGE: REVIVING A PIECE OF HISTORY P2



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Social Welfare Department

"Men are mortal. So are ideas. An Idea needs propagation as much as a plant needs watering. Otherwise both will wither and die".

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Bharata Ratna, Architect of Constitution, Great Humanitarian

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR

(April 14, 1891- December 6, 1956)

MAHAPARINIRVAN DIVAS

(December 6, 2020)

Venue :
In Front of Vidhana Soudha (East Gate),
Bengaluru
Time : Sunday, 10.00 AM

Dr. Ravi Kumar Surpur I.A.S
Commissioner
Social Welfare Dept.

Dr. N. Nagambika Devi I.A.S
Addl. Chief Secretary to Govt.
Social Welfare Dept.

As is enshrined in our Constitution, "to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture" - is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.